

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5216 of July 3, 1984

**National Duck Stamp Week
Golden Anniversary Year of the Duck Stamp, 1984**

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Among our most cherished wildlife resources are migratory waterfowl. The ducks, geese, and swans of North America not only fascinate us with their beauty and spectacle, they remind us of the continuing values of a clean, safe, wholesome environment. The health of our waterfowl resources depends on the well-being of their environment. If the Nation's wetlands are lost, these birds and the many other fish and wildlife resources they support cannot thrive. In recognition of the vital link between wildlife and wetlands, the United States has created an extensive system of National Wildlife Refuges. This great array of wild lands and waters provides countless opportunities for our waterfowl to nest and feed. We have so many of these refuges to enjoy today because of the farsighted practices of successive generations of Americans.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. To implement this law, the first Duck Stamp was issued later that year. The Duck Stamp was the creation of Jay N. "Ding" Darling, an award-winning editorial cartoonist and pioneer conservationist. It was his idea that every waterfowl hunter in this country had a vital stake in wetland and waterfowl conservation and that each should share in the responsibility to maintain that wildlife tradition they held so dear.

In the 50 years that have passed since the introduction of the Duck Stamp, it has become one of the Nation's most successful conservation programs. Almost 90 million of the stamps have been sold, generating more than \$285 million for waterfowl conservation. All or part of 186 National Wildlife Refuges—a total of 3.5 million acres—have been acquired through Duck Stamp revenues.

In the last 50 years, Americans have become increasingly aware that wetlands provide essential habitat for ducks and geese and contribute significantly to other wildlife resources including endangered species, open space recreation, commercial and sport fisheries, flood control, groundwater recharge and water purification. A recent study by the Department of the Interior concluded that the United States is losing wetlands at the pace of nearly one-half million acres every year, an area the size of the State of Rhode Island. Clearly, the Duck Stamp program is as important today as it was in 1934.

In recognition of the contributions of the Duck Stamp program, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 270, has designated the week of July 1 through July 8, 1984, as "National Duck Stamp Week" and 1984 as "Golden Anniversary Year of the Duck Stamp" and authorized and requested the President to issue an appropriate proclamation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of July 1 through July 8, 1984, as National Duck Stamp Week and 1984 as the Golden Anniversary Year of the Duck Stamp. I urge all Americans to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies and events, including participating in this program.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

RONALD REAGAN

Editorial note: For the President's remarks of July 3, 1984, on the commemoration of the 50th year of the Duck Stamp, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 20, p. 966).

Proclamation 5217 of July 5, 1984

Veterans' Preference Month, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Forty years ago—on June 27, 1944—President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Veterans' Preference Act. This statute brought together, for the first time, laws, Executive orders, and regulations extending back to the Civil War which granted preference in Federal employment to veterans.

58 Stat. 387.

The primary purpose and philosophy of the Veterans' Preference Acts are to assist veterans in obtaining and retaining Federal jobs for which they qualify. They constitute not only a means of rewarding veterans for their service in the Armed Forces, but also a means of preventing them from being penalized, in the search for employment, by the fact that the months or years they spent in the service of their country isolated them from the civilian world. In recognition of the economic disadvantage suffered by this service, these Acts seek to give these veterans a favorable position in competing for Federal employment. At the same time, the veterans' preference laws have been drafted so that they are compatible with the merit principle of public employment.

Veterans' preference is but a partial recognition of the great debt of gratitude that the country owes to those who have served in the Armed Forces. Its success is evidenced by the fact that 40 years after World War II, 30 years after Korea and 10 years after Vietnam, veterans comprise 39 percent of the non-Postal Federal work force and 52 percent of the Postal work force.

In recognition of the fortieth anniversary of the Veterans' Preference Act, and to honor the men and women who have served their country in the Armed Forces, the Congress of the United States, by Senate Joint Resolution 297, has designated June 1984 as "Veterans' Preference Month," and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that month.

Ante, p. 281.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 1984 as Veterans' Preference Month.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of July,